



U.S. Department of Justice

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FORMER LEAF RIVER VOLUNTEER FIREMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL ARSON CHARGE

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; ANDREW L. TRAVER, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, & Explosives; PAUL A. LOGLI, Winnebago County State's Attorney; RICHARD A. MEYERS, Chief of the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department; DAVID B. FOREMAN, Illinois State Fire Marshal; TODD STOCKBURGER, Chief of the Winnebago Police Department; and ROB MARTIN, Chief of the Winnebago Fire Department, today made the following announcement:

MATHEW M. BOOK, 34 (DOB: 4/17/71), formerly of 9682 Montague Road, Winnebago, Illinois, pled guilty in federal court today to arson. Book was indicted on July 11, 2006 by a federal grand jury in Rockford and charged with maliciously starting a fire on May 10, 2006, which destroyed a building located at 2758 Alworth Road, Winnebago, Illinois, which was used in interstate commerce.

At the time of Book's plea, he admitted that on May 10, 2006, between approximately 12:30 a.m. and 1:15 a.m., he went to 2758 Alworth Road in Winnebago, Illinois and entered a storage building with a grain elevator. The building was used in the operation of an farm service and supply company. Book admitted that he had previously been employed by the company. The storage building was connected to a natural gas line, had a 250 gallon oil drum inside, and contained several types of farm chemicals. Book admitted that he started a pile of saw dust and some wooden boards on fire and left the building. Book further admitted that he started the fire near the 250 gallon oil drum and that when he left the building, the flames were 6-8 inches high. The storage building was completely destroyed as result of the fire.

Book is being held in federal custody awaiting his sentencing hearing which is scheduled for December 20, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. Book faces a minimum sentence of 5 years and a maximum potential sentence of 20 years in prison without parole, and a fine of up to \$250,000. His actual sentence will be determined by a United States District Court Judge, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The case was investigated by the Rockford office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department, with the assistance of the Illinois State Fire Marshal's Office, the Winnebago Police Department, and the Winnebago Fire Department. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph C. Pedersen.

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